



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

## Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

### Advisory: Drum-Style Fluorescent Lamp Crushers

Drum-style fluorescent lamp crushers are being marketed to municipalities and businesses, with claims of saving money (compared with the cost of recycling lamps) and space (less required to store lamps for pickup). When assessing this type of equipment, please consider the following issues:

Studies have found mercury leaking from drum-style crushers, which may pose an occupational and environmental hazard. Studies on drum-style fluorescent lamp crushers published by the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) and the [California Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) indicate that mercury vapor can leak out of drum crushers through misuse and/or faulty seals. Removing the crusher from the drum and sealing the drum for disposal exposes the operator to mercury vapor and releases it into the environment.

Depending on the hazardous waste generator status of a municipality or business, a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) permit or license may be required for the use of lamp crushing equipment.

Crushing of lamps is allowed as a "recycling" activity under the Massachusetts Universal Waste rule (a streamlined set of hazardous waste requirements at 310 CMR 30.1034), but the process must separate the crushed material into its component parts (end-caps, glass and mercury/phosphor powder) so that each can be recycled.

A drum-style crusher that does not separate the crushed material into component parts for recycling does not satisfy the requirements of this regulation and will be subject to the Massachusetts hazardous waste licensing requirements. Generators who operate drum-style crushers that do not comply with the recycling requirements or are not properly permitted or licensed may be subject to enforcement action.

For more information on drum crushers, contact James Paterson of MassDEP: 617-556-1096 or [james.paterson@state.ma.us](mailto:james.paterson@state.ma.us)

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

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